

**CHALLENGES FACING TOP MANAGEMENT IN
RESTRUCTURING AND RATIONALISING
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER:
THE CASE OF
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**



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**Assignment presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master in
Public Administration
at the University of Stellenbosch**

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November 1999

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or partly submitted it at any university for a degree.

DATE:

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SUMMARY

The study project was undertaken in response to challenges facing Top Management in restructuring and rationalising the Department of the Premier: the case of Mpumalanga Province. Top Management was faced with four challenges: reorganising the structure, rationalisation, relocation of personnel and the implementation of affirmative action.

The objectives of this study are to determine whether the process of restructuring the Department has been fair, inclusive and objective, to explore and describe reactions of officials on all three levels of management, to determine the impact of the process on officials and on the organisation structure of the Department, to analyse the research findings and to propose recommendations.

The results of the research confirm the hypothesis that the process of restructuring and rationalising the Department of the Premier of the Mpumalanga Province was not productively conducted. The study was restricted to the Department and except for the relocation of personnel, eighty percent of respondents confirmed the aforementioned hypothesis. The results and findings thereof can be viewed as representative of all personnel in the Department.

Recommendations are proposed with the aim of readjusting the restructured Department by building institutional mechanisms, by creating an environment of participative management, and by developing a business plan for the Department.

OPSOMMING

Die studieprojek was onderneem in reaksie op die uitdagings wat topbestuur in die herstrukturering en rasionalisering van die Departement van die Premier: die geval van Mpumalanga Provinsie, in die gesig staar. Topbestuur is deur vier uitdagings in die gesig gestaar: herorganisering van die organogram, rasionalisasie, herplasing van personeel en die implementering van regstellende aksie.

Die doelwit van die navorsing was om vas te stel of die proses van herstrukturering van die Departement inklusief, objektief en regverdig onderneem is; om ondersoek in te stel na die reaksie van bestuursamptenare op al drie bestuursvlakke; om vas te stel wat die impak van die proses van herstrukturering op die Departement was; en laastens, om die navorsingsbevindings te analiseer en aanbevelings te maak.

Die navorsingsresultate het die hipotese bevestig dat die proses van herstrukturering van die Departement van die Premier nie regverdig uitgevoer is nie. Die studie was beperk tot amptenare van die Departement en afgesien van dié amptenare wat verplaas is, het tagtig persent van die Departement se oorblywende amptenare voorgenoemde hipotese bevestig. Die resultate van die ondersoek kan dus beskou word as verteenwoordigend van alle personeel van die Departement.

Aanbevelings word gemaak met die doel om sekere veranderinge in die herstruktureerde Departement in te stel deur middel van die daarstelling van institusionele meganismes, die skep van 'n omgewing waarin amptenare deel sal wees van die besluitnemingsproses, en die ontwikkeling van 'n besigheidsplan vir die Departement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank and indicate my indebtedness to the following people who assisted me and contributed to the success of this assignment:

Prof. Kobus Muller for his patience, perseverance and intelligent advice.

My beloved wife, Bubsey and children for their intimate support and assistance.

My parents, brothers and sisters for their moral and emphatic support.

Mr JM Hargovan, Head of the Department of the Premier of Mpumalanga Province, members of Top Management and all colleagues for their valued assistance and co-operation.

Alice Mabanga and Meisie Mtshweni for their computer skills and continued contribution towards the completion of this assignment.

May God bless you all

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1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

After the 1994 democratic elections, the homeland system was constitutionally done away with. Section 144 of the Interim Constitution, 1993 (Act 200 of 1993) provides for the institutionalisation of provincial departments of Premiers. In the case of Mpumalanga Province, implications of this provision were that the administrations of the former departments of Chief Ministers of KaNgwane and KwaNdebele homelands, and part of the Department of the State President of the Republic of Bophuthatswana, were to be restructured and rationalised into a single Department of the Premier.

The process of integrating the three old administrations is complicated. This is because they were instituted on the basis of dissimilar structures aimed at serving different ethnic groupings. Challenges facing members of top management in this regard were born out of the process of reorganising the structure (organogram) of the new department, rationalisation of the department, relocation of personnel, and the implementation of affirmative action.

1.2 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organised into six sections: section one deals with the explanation of the background to the study. Section two explains concepts, the hypothesis and the research methodology. Section three deals with the theory considered during the research process. Section four evaluates the research findings against theory considered. Section five indicates limitations to the study. Sections six concludes by linking the hypothesis with the findings of the study, and provide recommendations for considerations.

1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995:43) maintains that the government has initiated a concerted and comprehensive program of administrative restructuring and rationalisation. The objectives herein are to create a unified and integrated service, to restructure the senior management echelon, and to create a learner

and more cost-effective organisation that will be able to manage the deployment of the services from the eleven former homeland administrations to six provincial administrations in the Republic of South Africa.

The White Paper further maintain that the creation of a unified service involves the process of the transfer of functions and organisational components of former administrations to the new provincial Department of the Premier, the restructuring and rationalisation, and the staffing of the new rationalised structure.

According to this directive by the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, the erstwhile homeland departments of the former Chief Ministers of KaNgwane and KwaNdebele, and the department of the State President of the Republic of Bophuthatswana Government, were to be restructured and rationalised into a new department: the Department of the Premier. The Department of the Premier is expected to perform its provincial duties in terms of Section 147 of the Interim Constitution (Act 200 of 1993). Implications herein were that members of top management of the Department of the Premier have to restructure and rationalise the three splinter administrations and their organisational structures into a single department. The process involved the relocation of 422 employees to head office and, at the same time, implementing affirmative action.

2. CONCEPTUALISATION

According to Mouton (1996:114) conceptualisation means to define key concepts in the problem statement. In line with this and for the purpose of the research, relevant concepts to be referred to in the study, will be defined as follows:

2.1 TOP MANAGEMENT

According to de Beer, et al (1998:12) the top management of an organisation is constituted by officials appointed permanently or temporarily in the establishment. Top management of the Department of the Premier is constituted by officials at the level of:

- ◆ Assistant Director
- ◆ Deputy Director

- ◆ Chief Director

2.2 HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (HOD)

The Head of Department is the person appointed in terms of the Public Service Act of 1994. He/she is responsible for the efficient management and administration of his/her department.

2.3 MIDDLE MANAGERS

Van der Walt, et al (1997:157) say that the middle management of an organisation consists of supervisors responsible for the tactical management of an institution. In the Premier's department, such officials are at the level of:

- ◆ Senior Administrative Officers
- ◆ Administrative Officers
- ◆ Assistant Administrative Officers

2.4 JUNIOR MANAGERS

Junior or low level managers are responsible for the operational management at functional level (Cloete, 1994:224). In the Department of the Premier, junior managers are at the level of:

- ◆ Senior Administrative Clerk
- ◆ Administrative Clerk
- ◆ Grade level 1 and Grade level II personnel

2.5 CHALLENGES

For the purpose of this study, challenges will mean those administrative and management issues warranting strategic approaches by members of top management in restructuring and rationalising the Department of the Premier of the Mpumalanga Province.

2.6 RESTRUCTURING

For the purpose of this study, restructuring will mean the reorganisation of the three splinter administrations into a single department.

2.7 RATIONALISATION

Rationalisation will mean the process of rearranging and placing (absorbing) personnel in the new restructured department. It entails organising the most favourable form of rendering of services that gives the maximum yield and uses the minimum effort, time and money (Botes, et al, 1997:413).

2.8 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

Objectives of this research are to determine whether the process of restructuring and rationalising the Department of the Premier has been fair, inclusive and objective. To explore and describe reactions of officials in top, middle and junior management levels regarding their views on the restructuring and rationalisation of the Department. To determine the impact that the process had on the new structure and on officials in the department; and to conclude by proposing recommendations for consideration.

3. HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis put forward is: "The process of restructuring and rationalising the Department of the Premier, Mpumalanga Province, was not productively conducted".

4. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this section is to explain the research methodology. It is achieved by describing the survey method for collecting data, describing relevant literature consulted, providing the statement of the hypothesis; and by the description of a questionnaire as a measurement tool.

This study is a descriptive one as it gives an accurate reflection of a target population by describing its existing traits, views, attitude or behaviour. Data was gathered through

documents studied, through a personal interview with the Head of the Department (Chief Director), and through questionnaires distributed to 215 personnel of the Department (Brynard and Hanekom, 1997:06), (Leedy, 1984:34) and (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995:41).

Brynard and Hanekom (1997:30) maintain that successful research depends on a well planned and thorough review of the available and relevant literature. To comply with this, relevant books, document files, journals and legislative documents were perused and utilised to test the hypothesis.

To achieve the research objective, the target group involved is officials in the Department of the Premier, Mpumalanga Province. The target population consisted of 215 personnel members at the administrative level of top, middle, and junior management. It is therefore representative of all officials in the Department of the Premier. This is because all officials in the Department of the Premier are placed respectively in these three levels.

For the purposes of the research, random stratified sampling is convenient. The population to be studied is composed of more than one variable in the form of sex, age, marital status, the number of years employed, the rank, and the administrative level he or she occupies in the Department of the Premier. These variables enable the sample to be used to comply with Huysamen's (1994:40) argument that in the case of stratified random sampling, various strata or sub-population is firstly identified and a random sample is then drawn from each separate stratum or sub-population.

The type of research used in the study is both qualitative and quantitative. It is based on information gathered from officials through questionnaires, documents and through personal interviews and observation. It is an applied research in that it is undertaken to solve certain problems by using the results acquired (Brynard and Hanekom, 1997:05).

The measurement instruments used were questionnaires, personal interviews, and personal observation. Closed and open-ended questions were designed. Such questions were based on the theoretical framework developed from literature reviewed as well as the researcher's personal observations and experience. Questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to individual personnel and some were handed over during meetings of

each level of the Department of the Premier. Questionnaires (Annexure A) were submitted to the researcher's supervisor for advice and approval.

The language used in the questionnaires was English. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents from 30 March 1997 to 30 April 1997. A cover letter specifying who is conducting the research and outlining the purpose of the research accompanied questionnaires. The letter indicated that the research was conducted with the approval of the Head of the Department (Chief Director) of the Premier, and that responses thereof will be treated in a strictest confidentiality (Annexure B and Annexure C).

5. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 STRUCTURAL REORGANISATION

Berkley (1995:07) emphasises that planning permits an organisation to prepare for the process of reorganising the structure and to manage the process as it develops further. This argument is in line with Klingner (1983:181) assertion that planning offers a way of institutionalising vision and innovation. In reorganising the structure of the Department of the Premier, planning will provide top management with alternatives on the type of changes required to enable the organisational structure to meet objectives. It will also provide alternatives to determine whether new functional units may have to be created or old ones are to be eliminated. Organisational design forms part of the planning process as it entails work methods or processes and the human consequences of technical change to accomplish objectives.

Keeling (1972:125) say that, in reorganisation the structure of the Department of the Premier, strategies which will produce different outputs and achieve better outcomes are required. This will facilitate effective utilisation of resources in the provision of services, particularly after the restructuring process. By this, the process will also be complying with Hersey and Blanchard (1988:365) assertion that by employing a strategy towards restructuring and rationalisation, all interrelated factors are to be taken into consideration.

Cloete and Mokgoro (1995:02) maintain that the restructuring of the public service in order to effect transition to the new Department of the Premier would necessitate a more systematic analysis of the current problems and options. This argument is also in line with

Harvey and Brown's (1996:205) view that the structure of an organisation is not only important for change, but also provides a framework that relates elements of the organisation to one another. Botes, et al (1997: 413) and Andrews (1994:08) say that structural reorganisation implies that a specific organisation structure is created in order to ensure efficient utilisation of personnel, and ultimately goal accomplishment. To achieve this, Sondaer and Sondaer (1994:27-28) say that emphasis should therefore be placed on the internal dynamics of the organisation.

According to Nasser, et al (1997:57), designing a formal organisational structure involves the choice and arrangements of the various administrative components of an institution. Harvey and Brown (1996:04) further argue that by being involved in restructuring and rationalising the Department of the Premier, top management is involved in the process of organisational development. For the process to be productive, it must entail a properly planned strategy towards the attainment of co-ordinated, structured and integrated objectives to provide it with choices amongst alternative arrangements.

Hersey and Blanchard (1988:358-359) maintain that top management, as change agents, should provide guidelines and directives for the manner in which the structure will be reorganised. They should optimally mobilise human resources and energy to achieve the aims of reorganising the structure and at the same time, maintain a viable, growing organisation of people whose personal needs for self-worth, growth and satisfaction are significantly met, particularly at work.

5.2 RELOCATION OF PERSONNEL

In relocating personnel, Caiden (1982:197) say that the intention of personnel relocation is not the replacement of a failed system. The main aim thereof should be to simplify public personnel practices by strengthening and upgrading the professional public management systems, to widen access to public employment, and to promote greater mobility between public and private sectors, to raise public sector performance, productivity, incentives and attractiveness, and to strengthen public employee rights against discretionary treatment. These objectives should be taken into consideration during the process of personnel relocation.

The White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service (1995:44) states that all deployment of staff in the new structures of public institutions must adhere to the following principles:

- ◆ Actions must promote efficiency, effectiveness and an unhindered continuation of services.
- ◆ Actions must be fair, transparent and in accordance with applicable employment and labour legislation.
- ◆ Actions should create the least possible disruption for staff, departments or administrations, and should pay due regard to the personal circumstances and preferences of staff.
- ◆ Actions must be affordable, attainable, practical, and flexible to accommodate the diverse concerns by officials.
- ◆ The establishment of a “grace” period of six months for serving officials whom cannot be absorbed, to enable them to apply for posts elsewhere in the service, after which they may be subjected to discharge.

According to Andrews (1994:17) effective planning of the relocation of personnel requires that processed information from personnel files be available and accessible to top management. This will ensure the availability of quantifiable data for the purposes of relocation of personnel. Hall (1989:229-230) further confirm this argument by saying that people in any organisation have different positions and their perceptions are influenced by available information regarding their positions. The availability of quantifiable data will empowers top management to take decisions that will ensure that the process of personnel relocation is objectively undertaken.

Harvey and Brown (1996:407) maintain that rationalisation of organisations includes organisational transformation that encompasses the take-over of existing personnel. Apart from appointing new personnel from disadvantaged communities, top management is expected to take over the currently serving members of staff from the administrations of the then Departments of Chief Ministers of KaNgwane and KwaNdebele, and the Department of the State President of the Republic of Bophuthatswana.

Fox, et al (1991:165) maintain that the process of relocating personnel brings about adaptation of personnel to the new environment of the Department of the Premier. It is

only through adaptation that the relocation of personnel will succeed. This will enable relocated personnel to be positive about their new environment. To be in a position to create a positive environment for the relocation process, top management should explore and intensify the process of communication, decision making and built in a problem solving mechanism in the relocation process.

5.3 RATIONALISATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER

Fox, et al (1991:164-165) say that a successful public manager is responsible for anticipating and stimulating change. As change agents, top management should perform a catalyst function in the process of rationalisation. They should be more thoughtful and cautious about cultural limitations and the environment within which the rationalisation process is functioning. This is mainly because top management will bear the long term consequences of the process of rationalising the Department of the Premier.

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995:44) stipulates the following norms and standards which should be adhered to in the staffing of rationalised structures:

- ◆ The carrying out of comprehensive review of personnel needs within departments or administrations, as well as an audit of skills and competencies of serving officials.
- ◆ The absorption of serving officials wherever possible and when the work content of a post has not changed significantly.
- ◆ The appointment of persons from outside the public service in order to promote greater representativity, after all available internal human resources have been considered and with due regard to the objective of a learning public service.
- ◆ The right of appeal for those adversely affected by the rationalisation process.

In rationalising the Department of the Premier, top management will be faced by challenges of identifying Robbins (1990:346) and (Hellriegel, et al's (1986:606) participatory technique. This is the most popular tool that can make change more acceptable to individuals and groups in an organisation that is undergoing rationalisation. It entails the process of identifying a best possible technique in order to detect problems during the rationalisation process and taking proactive actions to address them.



For the rationalisation process to succeed, Rosenzweig, et al (1995:62) say that a specific climate for planned rationalisation is significant. Such climate should include an accurate diagnosis of problems in the department that is undergoing rationalisation. In the case of the Department of the Premier, the diagnosis process will recognise and interpret the problem by assessing the need for rationalisation, determine the rationalisation strategy, identify resources and motivation for change for both top management and junior officials, and determine the department's readiness, capacity and capability for rationalisation.

According to Smith (1994:102) the systems approach empowers top management with change management planning tools. It enriches the rationalisation process with what Shein as quoted by Fox (1991:165) refers to as the "adaptive coping circle". It enables the rationalisation process to readjust to any possible unforeseen circumstance in the process.

5.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

According to the White Paper on Affirmative Action (1998:09-13), affirmative action is defined as additional corrective steps which must be taken in order that historically disadvantaged people derive full benefit from fair and equitable employment opportunities. Affirmative action is not seen as an activity undertaken in addition to other administrative tasks, but as an essential tool for achieving the organisation's strategic and operational goals.

Klingner and Nalbandian (1993:81 and 122) maintain that affirmative action is a system approach that attempts to reinforce equal employment opportunity by challenging conventional recruitment and selection procedures. It is therefore oriented towards more value for social equity and not with quotas. For it to be productively implemented, job evaluations should be performed on existing jobs or positions. In line with this argument, the quality of each position should be analysed, defined and developed. Once job evaluation and its subsequent ratings have been performed, jobs should be reviewed for objectivity and reality testing. Consensus should then be reached in identifying those positions that can be earmarked for affirmative action.

The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995:55) concurs with Thomas and Hunger (1992:10) in that it gives legal effect to the criteria by which the implementation of affirmative action is defined. The White Paper provide that each

department at national and provincial level will be required to draw detailed affirmative action plans designed to meet specific needs of black people, women, and people with disabilities. Such plans will need to be consistent with policy objectives and performance measures prepared in what Lewis (1996:206) refers to as “process consultant” undertaken with the unions and stakeholder groups involved. Such departmental plans have to include:

- ◆ An audit of the composition of the department’s personnel according to race, gender and disability.
- ◆ Goals, objectives, measurable targets and outcomes for the affirmative action process.
- ◆ Methods for the monitoring and evaluation of progress.
- ◆ The people and units designed as responsible within the department for ensuring the effective implementation of affirmative action programme.
- ◆ Training programme to promote affirmative action.
- ◆ Awareness raising and training strategies designed to promote a positive view of affirmative action and to discourage tokenism and the stereotyping of beneficiaries.

According to the Public Service Act (1995: 19) top management must be cautious about the danger of brain drain, particularly during the implementation of affirmative action. Whilst there are those public servants who are fully committed to the need for change and restructuring, there are those who are fearful about change and they possess marketable skills and professional ethos required by the new public service. Should top management not prioritise the adequate address of their fears and anxieties, there is a possibility of them leaving the Department of the Premier.

Affirmative action is more than a principle. It also entails a strategy and tactics in that its implementation must be developed over a period of time. These tactics must include a program of action, a monitoring and evaluation procedure, and a defined target. It should not only be linked to the restructuring of the Department of the Premier, but also the identification and development of skills for the future. It is through a well-managed integrated human resource development approach that an efficient and proactive representative Department of the Premier is ensured. This would involve areas such as recruitment and selection, organisational development and skills training (Cloete and Mokgoro, 1995:82).

6. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this section is to present the result of the demographic representation of respondents, and to report on findings.

According to records of the Department of the Premier (1997), the new department also performs duties that were performed by the old departments of Chief Ministers of KaNgwane and KwaNdebele, and that of the Department of the State President of the Republic of Bophuthatswana. Whilst there were some slight technical changes in the structural reorganisation, the following will indicate that all units or divisions from the old splinter structures were retained:

- ◆ The division *Administration* changed to *Administration and Support Services*.
- ◆ *Communication and Information Services* were separated into *Communication and Protocol Divisions*.
- ◆ *Planning and Development Divisions* were split into the *Strategic Planning and Reconstruction and Development unit (RDP)*.
- ◆ *Traditional Authorities* became *Traditional Affairs*.

Out of a total of 215 respondents, the demographic variants are as follows:

Table 6.1: Age group distribution of respondents.

Respondent age category	% respondents	% in total population	Deviation from population
16 - 29	16	6	10
30 - 40	28	33	5
41 - 49	19	24	5
50 +	6	19	13

Table 6.1 reflects that the majority of respondents are in the 30 – 40 age group.

Table 6.2: Sex distribution of respondents.

Respondent Category	% of respondents	% in total population	Deviation from population
Male	43	51	8
Female	57	49	8

Table 6.2 indicates that the majority of respondents are females.

Table 6.3: Marital status.

Marital Status	% respondents	% in total population	Deviation from population
Married	24	33	9
Single	31	41	10
Divorced	6	8	2
Widower	9	12	3

Table 6.3 indicates that 24 % of respondents are married, 31 % are single, whilst 6% are divorced, and 9 % are widows.

Table 6.4: Distribution of respondents working in different divisions of the Department.

Section of department	% of respondents	% in total population	Deviation from population
Administration and Support Services	24	33	9
Strategic Planning	3	3	0
RDP	4	2	2
Director-General's Office	2	1	1
Premier's Office	4	3	1
Traditional Affairs	18	4	14
Youth Affairs	20	2	22

Section of department	% of respondents	% in total population	Deviation from population
Protocol Services	3	2	3
HRD	4	1	3
Communication Services	24	1	23
Others	1	1	

Table 6.4 indicates that the majority of workers are working in the divisions Administration and Support Services, Traditional Affairs, and Communication Services.

Table 6.5: Distribution of previous employment of respondents.

Previous employment	% of respondents	% in total population	Deviation from population
Public Sector	57	51	6
Private Sector	43	49	6

Table 6.5 indicates that the majority of respondents were previously working in the public sector (see question 5).

Table 6.6: Were officials informed about the aims of reorganising the structure of the Department of the Premier?

Sixty nine percent (69 %) of respondents indicated that they were not informed about the aims of reorganising the structure of the Department of the Premier. (See question 6. 7).

Table 6.7: Were officials invited to attend a workshop or a seminar on restructuring?

Eighty percent (80 %) of respondents reported that they were not invited to attend a workshop or a seminar on restructuring the Department of the Premier. Ten percent (10 %) indicated that they were invited, and fourteen percent (14 %) abstained (See question 6.8).

6.8 How did officials participate in the process of rationalising the Department of the Premier?

Sixty nine percent (69 %) of respondents reported that they did not participate, seventeen percent (17 %) reported that their respective supervisors represented them, and fourteen percent (14 %) abstained (See question 6.9 - 6.10).

6.9 Was the rationalisation process a top-down or a bottom-up approach?

Seventy percent (70 %) of respondents reported that it was a top down approach, 19% of respondents reported that it was a bottom-up approach, and 1.1 % abstained (See question 6. 11- 6.13).

6.10 Were officials informed about the aims of personnel relocation?

Fifty nine percent (59 %) of respondents reported that they were not informed. Nine percent (9 %) indicated that they were informed, and 32 % abstained (See question 6.14-6.16).

In an interview held on 25 August 1997 with the Head of Department of the Premier, Mr. Hargovan reported that the administration of the Department of the Premier is centralised at Nelspruit as the head office. After the 1994 general elections, all the 422 personnel, before rationalisation, were expected to relocate to head office. The main aim of this approach was to attain a functional and an effective department that will be in a position to integrate its service delivery.

According to Mr. Hargovan the following statistics are applicable regarding the relocation of personnel:

- ◆ The Department comprised of 422 employees before rationalisation.
- ◆ Forty (40) employees resigned immediately after the 1994 general elections.
- ◆ One hundred and twenty nine (129) employees were transferred to the Department of Safety and Security.
- ◆ Thirty-eight (38) employees were transferred to the Public Service Commission.

- 6.11 Was affirmative action fairly implemented during the process of restructuring the Department of the Premier?

Seventy nine percent (79 %) of respondents reported that affirmative action was not fairly implemented. They also reported that they were not invited to workshops or seminars on affirmative action. Six percent (6 %) reported that affirmative action was fairly implemented, and 15 % abstained (See question 6.22).

- 6.12 How was the Department of the Premier restructured?

Fifty six percent (56 %) of respondents reported that the department was unilaterally restructured, 26 % reported that it was participatory restructured, and 18 % respondents abstained (See question 6.22).

- 6.13 Was empowerment through training and mentorship considered during the process?

Seventy one percent (71 %) of respondents indicated that empowerment was not considered during the process, 26 % were satisfied with the process, and 3 % abstained (See question 6.22).

7. EVALUATION

The aim of this section is to compare the findings with theory.

7.1 REORGANISING THE STRUCTURE

According to an interview with Mr. Hargovan, the Head of Department of the Premier, which was held on the 25 August 1997, the process of reorganising the structure of the Department of the Premier was fairly conducted. He justified this by saying that all heads of sections were invited to meetings wherein inputs from officials in the three levels of the Department of the Premier were considered. He also said that circulars requesting inputs from all officials in the Department were

issued. However, 69 % of respondents indicated that the structure of the Department of the Premier was unilaterally reorganised. Reasons cited were that:

- ◆ Circulars calling for meetings were issued on short notice, e.g. on mornings of the date of these meetings.
- ◆ Heads of Divisions did not consult with officials in their divisions.
- ◆ The structure of the department was reorganised without an initial proper plan.
- ◆ No audit performance was conducted to analyse the current problems and options.
- ◆ No strategy was formulated to provide guidelines and directives for what will be undertaken.
- ◆ The old structures of the then Departments of Chief Ministers of KwaNdebele and KaNgwane and that of the Department of the State President of the Republic of Bophutatswana, were not taken into account when reorganising the structure.
- ◆ Workshops or seminars were not arranged to enable officials to contribute to the process of reorganising the structure of the Department of the Premier.

It is evident that the process of reorganising the structure of the Department of the Premier did not consider the overarching factors and was not inclusive of views and aspirations of officials serving it. This is supported by 69 % of respondents; 27 % did not contribute and 4 % did not respond. It also confirms that the process of reorganising the structure was performed against argument by Gibson, et al (1994:471) that it is the structure of an organisation that differentiates departments or divisions. In line with this, the old structures of the then Departments of Chief Ministers of KaNgwane and KwaNdebele should have been considered in reorganising the new structure of the Department of the Premier.

The manner in which top management reorganised the structure of the Department of the Premier was against Hall's (1989:115) argument that the process of reorganising the structure does not take place at random. The intention of the structure is to provide a degree of certainty of action and members of top management should consider the old structures in reorganising the new one. This argument is further confirmed by Hellriegel's, et al (1986:622) argument that a structure-focussed approach involves the redefinition of existing positions or roles,

relationships among such positions, and the expected behaviours of people in these positions. Top management should also consider Robbins (1990:151) and Juran's (1995:90) assertion that it is people and their interactions that are structured and there should be a systems approach that will provide a platform for interaction, communication, and synergy between the structure and people related to it.

In an interview, Hargovan (25 August 1997) said that top management could only get hold of the organisational structure of the Department of the Chief Minister of the former KwaNdebele. The top management could not trace the structure of the former KaNgwane and Bophuthatswana administrations. The old structures were therefore not considered in the restructuring process.

7.2 RELOCATION OF PERSONNEL

The process of relocating personnel to head office showed a different picture. Fifty nine percent (59 %) of respondents indicated that they were not informed about the aim of their relocation to head office. They also maintained that there was no action plan or guidelines that focussed top management towards addressing negative attitudes and behaviours of individuals and groups. Twenty eight percent (28 %) of respondents indicated that they were informed, whilst 13 % did not respond. However, 59 % and the 28 % of the respondents were satisfied about the manner in which the actual placed process of relocating personnel to head office was conducted. Reasons cited were that:

- ◆ Relocated officials were given a monthly allowance in terms of Chapter F of the Public Service Act of 1994. Allowances were given for a period of six months, which was extended to eight months.
- ◆ Relocated officials were provided with official transport, which they used on weekly basis to travel from head office (Nelspruit) to Witbank, Kwamhlanga, and Moretele.
- ◆ Two percent (2 %) of the relocated officials were for the first six months accommodated in government houses, and
- ◆ The relocation of personnel considered the absorption of those from the old administrations.

The findings on the relocation of personnel indicates that, although 59 % of the respondents said that they were not informed about the aim of their relocation to head office, the actual process was however fairly managed. Top Management in this regard complied with the principles provided in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995:44). Such principles states that actions must:

- ◆ Promote efficiency, effectiveness and an unhindered continuation of service provision.
- ◆ Be fair, transparent and in accordance with applicable employment and labour legislation.
- ◆ Create the least possible disruption for staff, departments or administrations, and should pay due regard to personal circumstances and preferences of staff; and
- ◆ Be affordable, attainable and practical with regard to individual circumstances.

By taking over the existing staff, top management complied with Harvey and Brown (1996:407) assertion that rationalisation of organisations includes organisation transformation that encompasses the take-over of existing personnel.

7.3 RATIONALISING THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER

Sixty nine percent (69 %) of respondents reported that they did not participate in the rationalisation process, 17 % reported that they were represented by their supervisors, and 14 % abstained. They also reported that the Department of the Premier was unilaterally rationalised. Reasons cited were that:

- ◆ No benchmarking was performed with a view of identifying a technique for rationalisation and a best possible way of detecting possible problems that may accrue in the process.
- ◆ No efforts were undertaken to accommodate the new diversity of culture that came along with rationalisation.
- ◆ No efforts were undertaken to improve the morality of employees and thereby addressing their uncertainty.

- ◆ Circulars of meetings on rationalisation were issued on the mornings of the date of these meetings.
- ◆ No audit of the total number of officials as well as their respective duties were undertaken and considered during the rationalisation process.
- ◆ Communication between top management and officials was inconsistent, distorted and not objective because Heads of Divisions did not ensure that they communicate with junior officials. If they did, it was not providing clarity on the process.
- ◆ Resources and the level of motivation for rationalisation were not determined.

This approach was against Fox, et al's (1991:164) argument that, as change agents, top management should perform a catalyst function during the process of rationalisation. It was also against the norms and standards as provided in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995:44). Such norms and standards stipulates the need for the carrying out of comprehensive review of personnel needs as well as an audit on the skills and competencies of officials serving in the Department of the Premier.

7.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

With regards to the implementation of affirmative action, 79 % of respondents maintained that it was unfairly implemented, 6 % reported that it was fairly implemented, whilst 15 % did not respond. Reasons behind these responses were that top management did not:

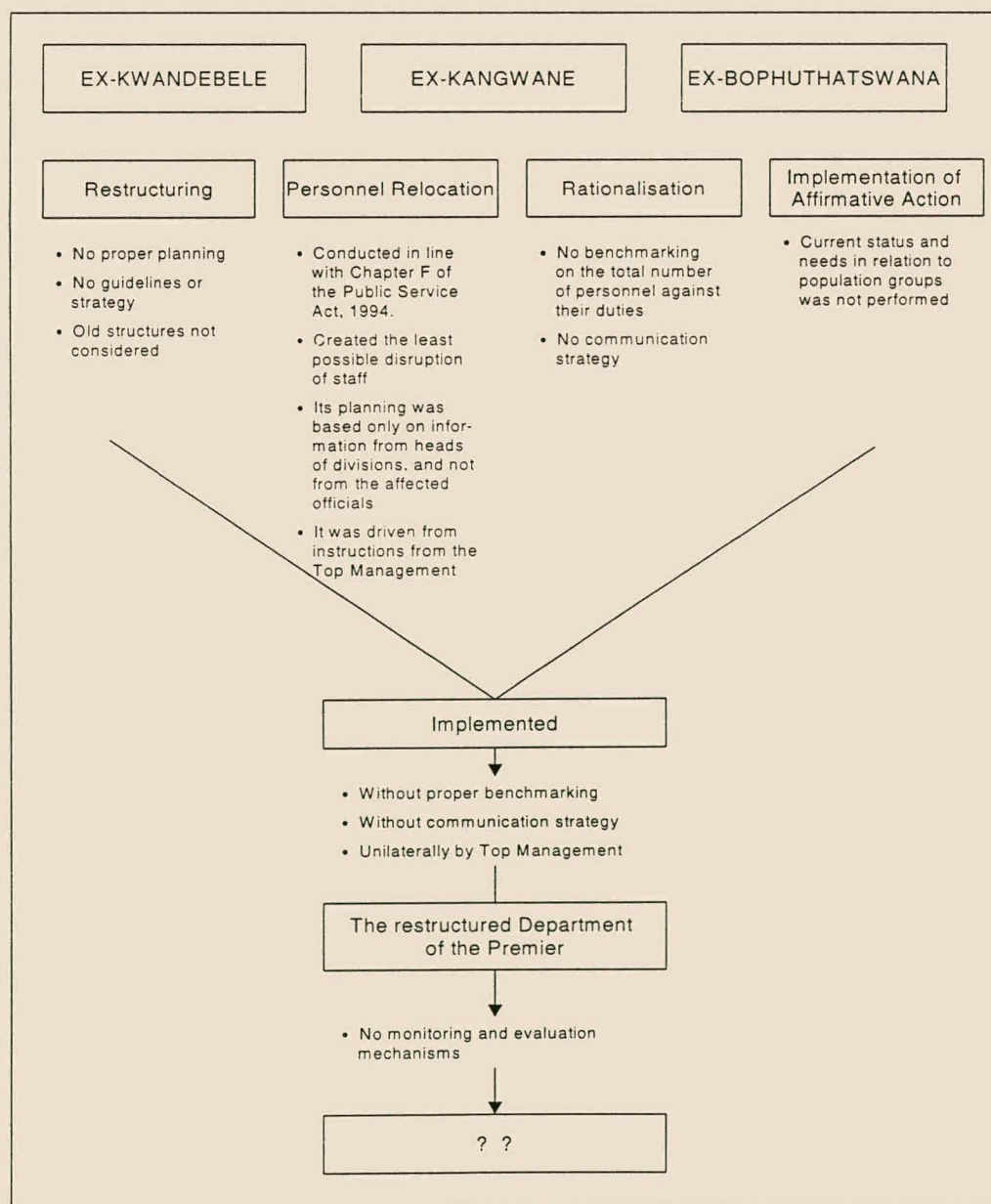
- ◆ Draw a detailed plan that would set measurable outcomes for affirmative action.
- ◆ Perform job evaluation on existing positions or jobs to be earmarked for affirmative action.
- ◆ Develop monitoring and reporting processes or mechanisms that would inform the affirmative action process about potential shortfalls.
- ◆ Develop a base line audit of existing personnel in terms of gender, disability, advantaged and disadvantaged personnel.
- ◆ Develop training programs to promote affirmative action.
- ◆ Raise awareness and initiate a positive view of affirmative action to discourage tokenism and the stereotyping of beneficiaries.

- ♦ The National Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), which is the only union in the Department, was not consulted.

In regard of the above, the implementation of affirmative action by top management did not comply with Levy in Cloete and Mokgoro (1995:76) argument that the aim of affirmative action is to encourage the fostering of practices which pro-actively promote attributes of accountability, openness, competency, efficiency, non-sexism and equity. This also indicates that top management did not comply with the provision of the White Paper on Transformation (1995:55).

FIGURE 1

According to the findings of the study, Figure 1 represents the manner in which top management restructured and rationalised the Department of the Premier:



8. LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

The research was restricted to the Department of the Premier of Mpumalanga Province. Except the relocation of personnel, 80 % of respondents confirmed the hypothesis. Results thereof can be viewed as fully representative of all employees of the Department of the Premier. Recommendations thereof can be extended to the entire personnel compliment of the Department of the Premier.

The following is recommended for further research:

- ◆ The interpersonal relation between and amongst officials at all levels in a restructured and rationalised department.
- ◆ The nature of the action plan put forward towards the attainment of the mission of the department.
- ◆ The manner in which top management is setting the course for affirmative action.
- ◆ The nature of the structural arrangements as related to its personnel, particularly after the rationalisation process.
- ◆ The long term impact of the process on the productivity and efficiency of the Department.
- ◆ The nature of the transformation strategy, if any, in the Department.

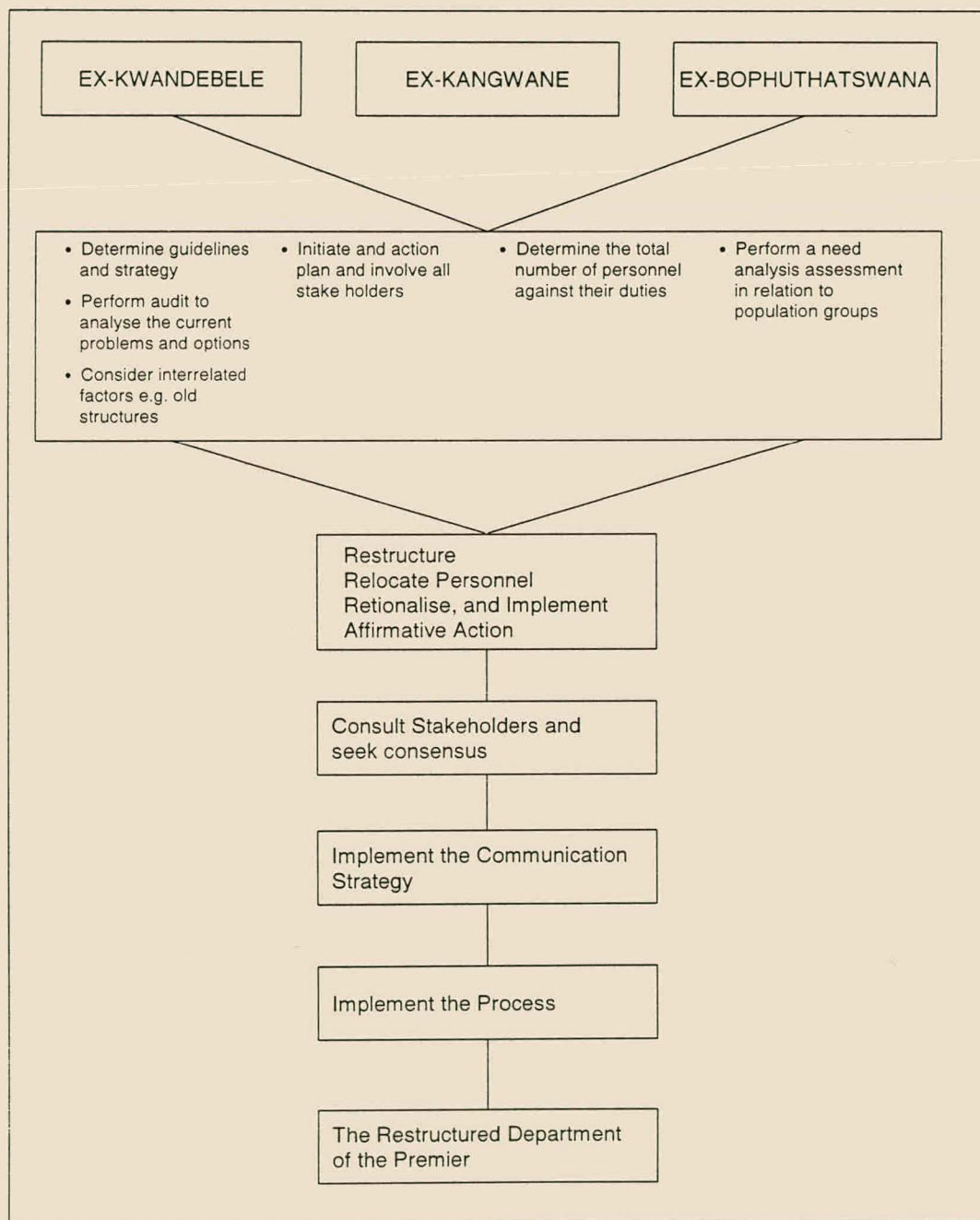
9. CONCLUSION

The result of the study confirmed the hypothesis put forward that the process of restructuring and rationalising the Department of the Premier of Mpumalanga Province was not productively conducted. With the exception of the process of personnel relocation, eighty percent (80%) of respondents confirmed the hypothesis.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

FIGURE 2

According to the findings of the study, Figure 2 represents the recommended procedure which should have been followed in restructuring and rationalising the Department of the Premier of Mpumalanga Province:



10.1 REORGANISING THE STRUCTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT

In view of the fact that the structure of the Department of the Premier has been completed, the following recommendations are made:

That a flatter structure be introduced. This system will enable the Department to:

- ◆ Introduce institution building and management systems.
- ◆ Improve channels of communication.
- ◆ Introduce a new system of management that will be participative and involve all officials in decision making.
- ◆ Be output-oriented.
- ◆ Facilitate the implementation of new policies and legislation; and
- ◆ Introduce a Transformation Unit desk that will monitor the functional validity of the system.

10.2 RELOCATION OF PERSONNEL

The research findings indicated that 87 % of respondents reported that the process of personnel relocation was fairly implemented. Top management in this regard adhered to the principles of the implementation of affirmative action as contained in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (1995:44). Such principles provide that the relocation of personnel should:

- ◆ Create the least possible disruption of staff.
- ◆ Be fair, transparent and in accordance with applicable employment and labour legislation.
- ◆ Pay due regard to the personal circumstances of staff; and
- ◆ Be affordable, attainable and practical with due regards to local conditions and circumstances of each individual.

However, 59 % of the 87 % respondents indicated that top management did not develop an initial action plan that would serve as a guide in relocating personnel. Reasons cited were that the relocation process was performed on the basis of information obtained from respective heads of divisions rather than from people

affected by the process, and that communication on relocation came only as an instruction and officials had no option but to comply.

10.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (1998:33) provide that affirmative action is not an activity undertaken in addition to other administrative tasks, but an essential tool for achieving the organisation's strategic and operational goals. It, therefore, follows that the implementation of affirmative action is an integral element of every aspect of the Department of the Premier.

The following recommendations are made on the implementation of affirmative action in the new Department of the Premier of Mpumalanga Province:

- ◆ That the Transformation Unit must, within a reasonable time frame, develop a departmental business plan on the implementation of affirmative action.
- ◆ That the Transformation Unit must, within a reasonable time frame, establish the current status and needs of each target group in relation to the implementation of affirmative action.
- ◆ That the Transformation Unit must, within a reasonable time frame, design a communication strategy on affirmative action.
- ◆ That top management should, within a reasonable time frame, review existing management procedures, practices and behaviour in relation to desired affirmative action goals.
- ◆ That top management should, within a reasonable time frame, initiate strategic workshops to serve as consultative forums for the implementation of policies on affirmative action and, evaluate and review progress in relation to the affirmative action programme at regular intervals to be able to amend it when necessary.
- ◆ That the National Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) be involved in the process of implementing affirmative action.

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12. ANNEXURES**A. Questionnaires****PART 1****SECTION A**

PLEASE MAKE A CROSS (X) IN THE APPROPRIATE SQUARE.

PERSONAL INFORMATION**1. AGE**

16 - 29		30 – 40		41-49		50+	
---------	--	---------	--	-------	--	-----	--

2. SEX

Male		Female	
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3. MARITAL STATUS

Married		Single		Divorced		Widowed	
---------	--	--------	--	----------	--	---------	--

4. IN WHICH SECTION OF THE DEPARTMENT ARE YOU EMPLOYED?

--

5. NUMBER OF YEARS

1-4 Years		5-10 Years		10-20 Years		20-30 Years	
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6. IN WHICH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OR WHICH COMPANY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR WERE YOU WORKING BEFORE RESTRUCTURING / RATIONALISATION?

--

SECTION B**7. WERE YOU INFORMED ABOUT THE AIMS OF RE-ORGANISING THE STRUCTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER?**

Yes	
No	

8. WERE YOU INVITED TO ATTEND WORKSHOPS / SEMINARS ON RESTRUCTURING?

Yes	
No	

9. DID YOU SUBMIT INPUTS TO THE PROCESS OF RATIONALISATION?

Yes	
No	

10. IF NOT, DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS?

Yes	
No	

11. IN YOUR OPINION, WAS THE PROCESS A TOP-DOWN OR A BOTTOM-UP PROCEDURE?

Top-Down	
Bottom-Up	

12. GIVE THREE REASONS FOR YOUR ANSWER.

.....

13. IN YOUR OPINION WAS THE PROCESS FAIRLY HANDLED?

Yes	
No	

SECTION C

14. WERE YOU INFORMED ABOUT THE AIMS OF THE PERSONNEL RELOCATION?

Yes	
No	

15. IF YES, HOW WERE YOU INFORMED?

.....
.....

16. DID THE PROCESS OF PERSONNEL RELOCATION INCONVENIENCE YOU?

Yes	
No	

17. IN YOUR OWN OPINION, WAS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FAIRLY IMPLEMENTED?

Yes	
No	

18. CAN YOU LIST THREE REASONS FOR THE ABOVE ANSWER.

.....
.....
.....

19. WERE YOU INVITED TO WORKSHOPS OR SEMINARS ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION?

Yes	
No	

20. HOW WAS THE DEPARTMENT RESTRUCTURED?

A – Unilateral
B – Participative

A	
B	

21. LIST REASONS FOR YOUR ANSWER.

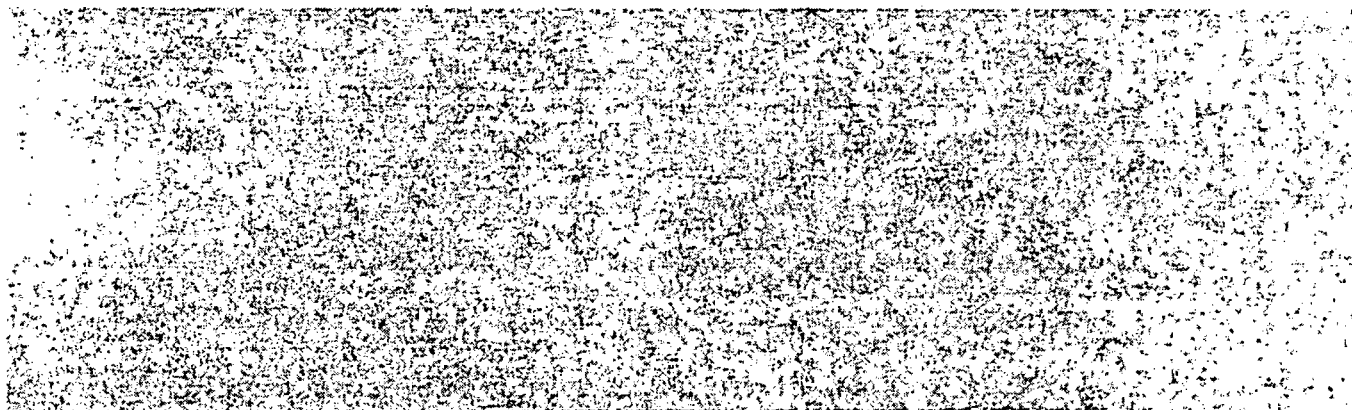
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.....

.....

22. WAS EMPOWERMENT THROUGH TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP
CONSIDERED DURING THE PROCESS?

Yes	
No	



UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH
P.O. BOX 610
BELVILLE
7535

TEL: 013 9472828

Dear Colleague

I am conducting research on the topic: Challenges facing top management in restructuring and rationalising the Department of the Premier. The research only covers the period after the 1994 general elections.

This forms part of the fulfilment of the requirements of my study towards a Masters in Public Administration degree with the University of Stellenbosch. Approval to conduct the research has been obtained from the Head of Department as per attached copy.

You are requested to answer the attached questionnaires as candidly as you can. Your response will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and the final report thereof will be tabled to the Head of the Department.

Questionnaires are to reach me on or before the 30 April 1997.

Yours faithfully

.....
SOLLY MASILELA

.....
DATE

The Head of Department
Department of the Premier
Private Bag x11291
Nelspruit
1200

University of Stellenbosch
P.O.Box 610
Belville
7535

Tel: (013) 9472828

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR CONDUCTING A RESEARCH PROJECT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER

I hereby request to conduct a research on challenges facing members of Top Management in restructuring and rationalising the Department of the Premier: Mpumalanga Province.

This form part of the fulfilment of the requirements of the Masters in Public Administration programme I am pursuing with the University of Stellenbosch

Hoping that my request will receive your most favourable consideration.

Solly Masilela
Student No : 9575472

Approved / ~~Disapproved~~

Comments On Condition that the copy of the
Study project is handed over to the
Head of Department.
.....

.....
JM Hargovan

20 March 1997
.....
Date